




DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH POLICY/PROCEDURE

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APPROVED BY:  Acting Director	SUPERSEDES 900.01 09/01/2001	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE 01/01/2000	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) 1

PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) policy, criteria, and guidelines governing the review and approval of employees' requests to travel on County business.
- 1.2 To provide procedures for LACDMH employees to request approval to travel on County business, receive Travel Advances, make travel arrangements, and claim reimbursement of authorized travel expenses.

DEFINITION

- 2.1 **Salary-Only Travel:** Authorization for employees to receive only their regular County salary while traveling on County business outside Los Angeles County. Travel includes employee attendance at conferences, seminars, business meetings, and training sessions. No overtime or travel expense may be claimed as the result of salary-only travel.
- 2.2 **Travel with Expenses Authorized:** Authorization for employees to receive their County salary and some or all expenses while traveling outside Los Angeles County on business. Travel includes employee attendance at business meetings, conferences, seminars, and training sessions. Employees may be authorized to receive reimbursement for transportation, lodging, meals, and any other allowable costs not to exceed the maximum travel expense reimbursement rates as set by the Auditor-Controller.
- 2.3 **Expense Reimbursement Rates:** Maximum reimbursement rates are set by the Auditor-Controller. Section 5.40.095 of the County Code requires the Auditor-Controller to annually adjust the maximum travel, meal, lodging, portage, and incidental expense reimbursement rates based on annual changes in the Consumer Price Index. The current rates are distributed internally on an annual basis and are also available from the LACDMH Travel Coordinator and/or the LACDMH Accounting Division.



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2.4 **Adjacent Counties:** Following counties are considered adjacent to Los Angeles County:

Kern	San Bernardino	Santa Barbara
Orange	San Diego	Ventura
Riverside	San Luis Obispo	

2.5 **Allowable Travel Expenses:** Expenses approved by the Administrative Deputy or Designee (Section 3.6) prior to travel, consistent with Auditor-Controller reimbursement rates and expenditures.

2.6 **Travel Authorization:** An approved travel request meets eligible criteria set by the Auditor-Controller. (Section 3.1)

2.7 **Travel Advances:** Funds advanced to employees for anticipated travel-related cost. (Section 4.1)

2.8 **Incidental Expenses:** Additional lodging and meal expenses associated with traveling to certain capital and primary cities. (Section 3.1.4)

2.9 **TravelStore:** A County-approved travel service agency.

POLICY

3.1 All travel must be requested in advance using the online Service Catalog. To be eligible for authorization, travel must meet the criteria below:

3.1.1 Have a purpose directly related to the employee's function and furnish information of substantial benefit to LACDMH/County.

3.1.2 Conference travel must be sponsored by a professional society or organization whose functions are directly related to LACDMH operations and where attendance by the employee would afford clear benefit to LACDMH and the County.

3.1.3 Up to seventy-five (75) percent of approved estimated travel expenses may be requested for approved travel with expenses authorized that



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meet the Auditor-Controller's criteria. Employees are eligible to request an advance warrant for approved travel expenses when the following conditions are met:

3.1.3.1 Length of stay is a minimum of three days and two nights.

3.1.3.2 Travel Request is submitted via online Service Catalog (Attachment 2) no later than fifteen (15) working days prior to the requested issue date of the warrant.

3.1.4 Incidental Expenses

3.1.4.1 Each claim for Incidental Expenses shall be reviewed and approved on its own merits. Spending amounts greater than the normal reimbursement amounts is not sufficient justification for approval of the claim. Generally, employees must demonstrate that increased expenses are unavoidable or necessary for the efficient conduct of business. It is the employee's responsibility to provide reasonable information to support his/her claims for an Incidental Expenses allowance.

3.1.4.2 Incidental Expenses allowances for travel to the following capital/major metropolitan cities may be claimed at a rate set by the Auditor-Controller:

Atlanta	Miami	Sacramento
Boston	Minneapolis	San Diego
Chicago	New York	San Francisco
Dallas	Philadelphia	Seattle
Detroit	Phoenix	Washington, D.C.
Houston	Riverside	

3.1.4.3 To be approved for Incidental Expenses reimbursement, employees must be required, for business purposes, to be physically present in a designated city for a portion of the day the Incidental Expense is claimed. Only employees who



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actually incurred additional expenses while traveling in designated city may claim the allowance.

- 3.1.5 Travel in general, but especially conference travel, shall be limited to one LACDMH representative unless a written documentation of overwhelming justification for additional attendees is approved by the Administrative Deputy or Designee.
- 3.1.6 Continuing education travel may be limited to a reasonable number of days per year per employee as designated in the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for specific employee representation units.
- 3.1.7 While reviewing travel requests for approval, management shall examine all relevant factors included in, but not limited to, the following:
- Local operational needs for adequate coverage;
 - Timeliness of the submission;
 - Individual need for training/skill development;
 - Overall value of attendance to specific job responsibility or mission of LACDMH; and
 - Employee's overall performance.
- 3.2 No approval will be given to travel when authorization is requested after the trip has been taken.
- 3.3 The LACDMH Travel Coordinator in the Administrative Support Bureau at LACDMH Headquarters is responsible for processing, tracking, and monitoring all LACDMH travel requests.
- 3.4 All LACDMH employees traveling outside Los Angeles County on County business MUST request and receive approval from the LACDMH Administrative Deputy or Designee in the online Service Catalog prior to the commencement of any travel.
- 3.4.1 Travel within Los Angeles County is considered salary-only travel, except for employees permanently assigned to work in the Antelope Valley who have been ordered by the Department Head to temporarily



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work elsewhere in the County, provided such employees are required to remain at the temporary work location overnight, or employees permanently assigned to work in an area other than Antelope Valley who are ordered by the Department Head to temporarily work in the Antelope Valley.

- 3.5 Approvals and reimbursements for training must be arranged through the LACDMH Human Resources Bureau (HRB) Training Division for Non-Clinical Trainings or Workforce Education and Training (WET) Division for Clinical Trainings. Registration fees to attend the trainings will be pre-paid by the appropriate Training Division after the Outside Training Request (OTR) is submitted and approved.
- 3.6 Allowable Travel Expenses include the following:
- 3.6.1 Actual cost of ground transportation by public carrier (airport shuttle, taxi, etc.) which may be claimed upon presentation of original receipts.
- 3.6.1.1 The most economical mode of transportation should be used to and from airports, bus, and rail terminals.
- 3.6.1.2 Taxi fares shall be allowed only when the use of public transportation or airport shuttle service is impractical or not available.
- 3.6.2 Mileage for privately owned vehicles used to travel
- 3.6.2.1 For travel outside California or to counties other than the adjacent counties listed in Section 2.4, mileage will be reimbursed at the rate of six (6) cents per mile or the equivalent of the fare via the most appropriate public carrier.
- For travel to the non-adjacent counties where public transportation is not a viable option, the Administrative Deputy or Designee may authorize reimbursement at the regular mileage rate.



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3.6.2.2 For travel within adjacent counties, regular mileage reimbursement rates apply for employees who are mileage permittees or occasional drivers. Non-mileage permittees receive six (6) cents per mile compensation.

3.6.3 Lodging

3.6.3.1 Single-occupancy hotel accommodation upon presentation of an original hotel bill summary (which separates non-reimbursable expenses, such as personal telephone calls, etc.). Maximum reimbursement without a receipt is \$20.00.

3.6.3.2 Lodging reimbursement for one (1) night prior to a meeting/conference, allowing the employee to arrive at the location prior to the early start time next day when public transportation is not available.

3.6.3.3 Lodging reimbursement for one (1) night after the end of a meeting/conference, allowing the employee to leave the location the following day when public transportation is not available the same day.

3.6.4 Meals may be claimed upon presentation of **itemized receipts**, except for:

3.6.4.1 Meals included in the cost of the meeting/conference;

3.6.4.2 Same day trips to any of the adjacent counties; and

3.6.4.3 Alcoholic beverages.

3.6.5 Airport parking

3.6.5.1 Reimbursement for airport parking is limited to the number of days of approved travel.



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3.6.5.2 The reimbursement rates for all airports in the Los Angeles region are those that are distributed annually with the Department's Expense Reimbursement memorandum unless otherwise approved by the Administrative Deputy or Designee.

3.6.5.3 Original parking receipts are required for reimbursement of airport parking cost.

3.6.6 Mileage and Hotel parking

3.6.6.1 Claims for miles driven to and from the airport for the same day trips should be submitted on the online Mileage Authorization and Reimbursement System (MARS) rather than with the paper Mileage Claim Form.

3.6.6.2 Claims for hotel parking and miles driven to and from the meeting/conference that require an overnight stay should be claimed using the paper Mileage Claim Form. (Attachment 3)

3.6.7 Porterage

3.6.7.1 Porterage includes fees or gratuities given to any airport porter or hotel bellhop for assistance with baggage.

3.6.7.2 Reimbursements for porterage are limited to travel approved for overnight trips and can only be claimed after the return from the approved travel.

3.6.8 Any gasoline purchased for the rental vehicle will be reimbursed upon the presentation of original receipts.

3.7 Employees must comply with all ordinances in the County Fiscal Manual relating to submission requirements of Expense Claims. (Attachment 1)



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PROCEDURE

4.1 Submission of Travel Requests and Travel Advances

4.1.1 Employees should prepare and submit all travel requests through the online Service Catalog at least fifteen (15) working days prior to the date of departure. Completed travel requests will be electronically forwarded to each appropriate supervisory level for approval:

- Supervisor,
- Bureau Analyst, and
- Deputy Director.

4.1.2 The LACDMH Travel Coordinator must receive all travel requests at least **five (5) working days** prior to the date of departure. Travel requests with an advance must be received by the LACDMH Travel Coordinator at least **fifteen (15) working days** prior to the date of departure.

4.1.2.1 If the Travel Coordinator does not receive the travel requests within the time frames mentioned above, a late submission justification and corrective action plan must be submitted for the Administrative Deputy's approval.

4.2 Completion of Travel Requests via online Service Catalog

4.2.1 Travel requests must include the following information:

4.2.1.1 Employee Information:

- Employee's Name
- Employee Number and Payroll Title
- Employee's Office Phone Number
- Name of the Program/Bureau/Unit
- Work Address: Street Address, City, Zip Code, and Floor



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4.2.1.2 Trip Information:

- Destination(s) and Travel Departure and Arrival Dates
- A detailed purpose and justification of trip describing the benefit to the LACDMH/County
- Mode of travel

4.2.1.3 Expense Information:

- Transportation amount
- Baggage fee
- Ground Transportation amount (shuttle, rental car, or taxi)
- Airport parking
- Lodging
- Meals

4.2.1.4 Funding:

- Funding Source
- Project Code
- Unit Code

4.2.1.5 Attachments:

- Invitation Letter, Agenda for the Event, or Conference Brochures
- Travel Itinerary (from TravelStore)
- Hotel Confirmation
- Outside Training Request (if applicable)
- Approved Request for Overtime or Time Off (ROTO) for Overtime (if applicable)

4.3 Completion of Travel Advances via online Service Catalog

- 4.3.1 In addition to the information listed in Section 4.2, Travel Advance requests must also include the following information:



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- Travel Advance justification
- Travel Advance amount

4.4 Completion of Travel Arrangements through TravelStore

4.4.1 All County employees are mandated by the Board of Supervisors, effective November 1, 2011, to use TravelStore and its online reservation system, Concur, to make all business travel arrangements including air, rail, rental car, and lodging. Phone agents are also available for more complex travel arrangements; however, this involves higher transaction fees. Therefore, phone agents can only be used when booking international travel or when flying domestically to multiple cities during the same trip (for example, flying from Los Angeles to Phoenix to Sacramento, and returning back to Los Angeles). **Domestic flights from the Los Angeles region to another city and returning back to the Los Angeles region may only be booked using TravelStore's online booking tool, Concur.**

- Online Reservation System (Concur):
<https://www.concursolutions.com>
- TravelStore provides 24-hour traveler emergency assistance. Live agents are available to assist employees during normal business hours at (877) 454-8785 and after-hours for emergency assistance at (800) 639-9368.

4.4.2 Employees should contact the LACDMH Travel Coordinator in the Administrative Support Bureau to set up their Travel Profile on Concur by emailing the following information:

- Employee Name as it appears on his/her Driver License
- Employee number
- Five-digit eCAPS Unit Code
- Work email address

4.4.3 Employees **must** obtain supervisor's approval for travel before making a reservation through TravelStore.



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4.4.3.1 TravelStore should only be used to get the cost estimates for planning purposes until approved by the supervisor.

4.4.4 Employees must notify TravelStore and the LACDMH Travel Coordinator if they need to cancel travel reservations. To ensure that proper credit is issued, employees must notify the Auditor-Controller of any Air Travel cancellations at the following email address: CountyTravelManager@auditor.lacounty.gov

4.4.5 Air Travel

4.4.5.1 TRAVELERS MUST KEEP A COPY OF THE AIRLINE TICKET CONFIRMATION NOTICE WHICH MUST BE UPLOADED TO THE ONLINE SERVICE CATALOG EVEN IF THE ONLY TRAVEL EXPENSE IS THE AIRLINE TICKET.

- Any air travel booked outside TravelStore is a policy violation and will **NOT** be reimbursed.

4.4.6 Rental Cars

4.4.6.1 Employees may rent a car at their destination only when it is less expensive than other transportation (e.g., taxi, airport shuttle) or the nature of the travel requires it. In situations where other economical mode(s) of ground transportation is available, a justification must be submitted to the Administrative Deputy or Designee for approval to demonstrate the need of rental car.

4.4.6.2 Non-mileage permittees can request hotel parking expenses on the Travel Request via the online Service Catalog, in the field for "Other." Travelers must submit an Expense Claim for reimbursement.



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4.4.7 Lodging

4.4.7.1 Hotel reservations must be secured with a personal credit card. Travelers must submit an Expense Claim for reimbursement. Employees are responsible for:

- Any non-business related spending (e.g., room service, pay-per-view entertainment, spa, etc.) beyond the basic lodging expense.
- Canceling hotel rooms through TravelStore's online booking tool, Concur, and by contacting the hotel before the cancellation period ends. Cancellation deadlines are usually based on the local time of the hotel. Employees should request and record the cancellation number in case of billing disputes.
- Any fees charged by the hotel for late cancellation or no-show unless the employee can document circumstances outside his/her control.

4.4.7.2 The only exception to making hotel reservations through anything other than TravelStore is when a group/conference rate is provided which is less expensive than the rate on TravelStore.

- Travelers are to verify if TravelStore can match the conference rate. If TravelStore cannot match the conference rate, the employee needs to document the effort on the online Service Catalog and can book directly with the Conference or hotel.

4.5 Submission of Expense Claims

4.5.1 Expense Claims (Attachment 1) shall be submitted no later than two (2) weeks after returning from an approved trip. Claims are to be made only for actual expenses incurred as part of approved travel.



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4.5.2 If a Travel Advance was received, the employee **MUST** submit an Expense Claim within two (2) weeks as well or the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.5.2.1 When the Travel Advance amount exceeds the Expense Claim amount, Accounting Division will notify the employee of the total amount due after the expense claim has been submitted and allowable reimbursements have been verified. Employee must send a check or money order made payable to the "County of Los Angeles" within the time period specified by the Accounting Division. If the payment is not submitted to Accounting Division within stated period after the notification, employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.5.2.2 When the Expense Claim amount is equal to the Travel Advance amount, an Expense Claim must still be filed.

4.5.2.3 When the Expense Claim amount exceeds the Travel Advance amount, a General Warrant will be issued to the claimant for the remaining balance.

4.5.3 If an Expense Claim is not submitted within two (2) weeks after completion of the trip, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action.

4.5.4 Incorrect, incomplete, or late Expense Claims will be returned back to the employee and may result in delayed or rejected reimbursement.

4.5.5 County regulations prohibit LACDMH from authorizing reimbursement for expense claims submitted later than one (1) year from the date of travel.

4.6 Completion of Expense Claims Forms

4.6.1 Expense Claim form must be completed with the following information:



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- Employee's name
- Employee number
- Employee's home address
- Employee's payroll title
- Employee's Bureau/Facility
- Employee's signature
- Date of claim (date form completed)
- Period of claim (inclusive of travel dates)
- Indication of each authorized expense claimed:
 - Date - each date's expenses should be listed separately
 - Description of expense incurred
 - City where expense incurred
- Total of expenses claimed

4.6.2 Original itemized receipts must be attached for all claimed expenses. For meals, a copy of the itemized receipt(s) can be attached in lieu of the original receipt.

4.6.3 Completed Expense Claims must be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor for verification and approval.

4.6.4 Once an Expense Claim is approved, the supervisor shall submit the Expense Claim and all attachments to the Accounting Division for payment processing and provide a copy to the employee.

4.6.5 After the payment has been processed, employees will be notified when a reimbursement warrant is available for pick up from the Accounting Division.

4.7 Notification of Approval or Denial of Travel

4.7.1 The LACDMH Travel Coordinator will promptly approve or reject travel request. Travel requests that are incomplete will be rejected.

4.7.2 Examples of incomplete travel requests include:



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- No attachments (when required);
- Incorrect funding information; and
- No overtime ROTO attached (when required).

- 4.7.3 Employees have the opportunity to add any attachment prior to the travel request reaching the travel coordinator for approval.
- 4.7.4 The Bureau Analyst must verify that all information is attached and the information in the request is correct before it is forwarded to the travel coordinator.
- 4.7.5 Employees will receive an email from the online Service Catalog letting them know if their travel has been approved or rejected.

AUTHORITY

1. Los Angeles County Code – Chapter 5.40
2. Los Angeles County Fiscal Manual – Chapter 13.1.0
3. Los Angeles County, Department of Auditor-Controller: New County Travel Services Program Memo, October 17, 2011

ATTACHMENT (HYPERLINKED)

1. [Expense Claim Form](#)
2. [Service Catalog](#)
3. [Mileage Claim Form](#)

REFERENCE

1. LACDMH Policy No. 614.03, Outside Training Request

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

LACDMH Administrative Support Bureau